

## Building a Godly Home

Whether a man and woman are entering marriage for the first time, or have experienced the trauma of divorce or the death of a spouse and are anticipating re-marriage, there are guidelines and responsibilities that God expects them to fulfill. How does a couple build a Godly home?

### Submission

Christians talk about the importance of submission in marriage, but not always with a clear understanding of what it means and what the Bible teaches.

Wives who try to submit to their husbands and fail are trying to do so in their own strength through good deeds. Submission is an attitude of the heart for all of us, men and women alike (Ephesians 5:21). Indeed, mutual subjection *is* a goal for both partners, but they can achieve it only by following God's plan for marriage. In the marriage relationship God calls the woman to take the first step by having a submissive attitude towards her husband.

Therefore, the first step to a Godly home is outlined in the following scripture.

"Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything" (Ephesians 5:22-24).

If wives are having a problem submitting to their husbands, they are also having a problem submitting to God. A woman pleases God by submitting to her husband.

Even if, as many wives say, their husbands do not assume their position as head of the house, wives are not to take over the husband's position of authority. Taking the first step of submission and committing it to God will encourage husbands to assume their role of spiritual leadership.

### Love

While the wife is the key to a Godly home, the man has the weightier responsibility:

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the Word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless. So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body." (Ephesians 5:25-30).

The second step to a Godly home, then, is a husband who obeys God and loves his wife as Christ loves the church. It takes time for a man to grow and learn how to love his wife with God's love. Would it not transform her, as it would transform any of us to experience fully the depth of God's love?

Husbands are to pour out His love in abundance upon their wives.

The more wives submit to their husbands, and the more husbands love their wives, the more they fulfill God's purposes for them.

"For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. Nevertheless let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see to it that she respects her husband" (Ephesians 5:31-33).

### **One Flesh**

The third step to a Godly home finds a wife and her husband becoming one flesh. Until a husband and wife practice the roles God has assigned to each, they cannot be in mutual subjection to one another as Ephesians 5:21 instructs.

As a man and wife draw closer to God, they become closer in their relationship with each other; on the other hand, the farther they get from God, the farther they grow from each other.

A marriage has a far greater likelihood of lasting when a couple fits into God's design for their lives. Rebellion against God will block the movement of the Holy Spirit between God and man, resulting in an unproductive relationship and unanswered prayers. (See Psalm 66:18 and 1 Peter 3:7). Obedience to God's Word, as well as a Christ-like attitude, will produce a Godly, fruitful marriage.

### **Looking to God**

A problem can arise when a wife thinks she has an unspiritual husband, whether he is a believer or not. Even though he may be consciously acting against God's will, she is to respect him as her husband. (See Ephesians 5:33.) She sets her mind on spiritual things by looking to God, not at her husband or circumstances, releasing him to the Lord and thanking God for him, not demanding change.

In the order that results, God's blessings will come. Satan cannot touch our families if husbands and wives assume their God-ordained roles. The choice is ours. Either we choose God's way and bring God's peace, joy and blessings of obedience into our homes, or we choose our own way and destroy our homes. God's way always works. We can overcome the world, not let the world overcome us.

We live in a day in which societal and other pressures push us to compromise our parental roles and responsibilities.

To understand our responsibilities as parents, we must understand God's principles for the family. We have studied a Godly marriage and now want to look at the role of parents through God's eyes.

### **Children: God's Blessings**

The fourth and final step to a Godly home is to recognize the following: "Behold, children are a gift of the Lord; The fruit of the womb is a reward.

Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them; They shall not be ashamed, When they speak with their enemies in the gate" (Psalm 127:3-5).

God blesses parents with children. Children go through a learning and maturing process, however, and can be obnoxious and rebellious at times. Then, only through God's eyes can parents see them as a blessing from Him and set a Godly example for them to follow.

Grandparents also have a responsibility not to meddle, but to instill in their grandchildren Christ-like attitudes, by example, to encourage and interact with them, pray with them, and share the Word with them.

The process of raising children is actually an exercise of faith because when we entrust our children to God, we know He will keep and guard them. "I know whom I have believed," wrote Paul, "and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day" (2 Timothy 1:12).

We have an opportunity to give of ourselves without limit as we care for our children unselfishly. This selfless giving helps us become more sensitive to others and to understand their needs.

Our responsibility before God for our children and grandchildren will keep us on our knees in prayer and bring deep spiritual growth in us. As Jesus prayed for His disciples in John 17, we must pray for our families. In raising our children, we become aware of being responsible to God for the lives of others.

### **God's Promises to Parents**

When we consider children to be a sacred trust from God, and train them to be accountable for their choices and actions, then we can trust the end result to Him. "Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6).

It is time for husbands and fathers to be the men God has created them to be—in their families, in their churches and in their communities—that the body of Christ might be perfected. Men of God will build up their wives and children. As a result, our homes will be in order according to God's Word.

Neither husband nor wife waits for the other to act. Both know God's commands and obey as unto Him.

A father's obedience to God will restore any breach between he and his children. "And He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers" (Malachi 4:6).

When husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, make their personal relationship with the Lord a priority, spending time in the Word and prayer, only one in 1,100 marriages fail. As a result, their homes will be a reflection of Christ.

Let's agree to build our homes according to God's Word and by so doing glorify Him.

Portions of this material were excerpted from: *"Handbook For Helping Others"* by Ken Stafford